

# Administrative Office of the Courts

Supreme Court of New Mexico

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To: Interested Parties  
From: Pam Sánchez, Statewide Program Manager, Court Interpreter & Jury Services  
Re: Registered Status For Interpreters of Languages With No Consortium Oral Examination

Changes approved by the New Mexico Court Interpreter Advisory Committee last fall included "language rich" approach to recruiting, training, and supporting court interpreter certification candidates. Accordingly, we have an increasing number of potential interpreters in languages other than Spanish, including individuals who interpret in languages other than those for which the Consortium has oral examinations.

At its meeting on March 13, 2009, the Court Interpreter Advisory Committee approved the creation of a registered court interpreter classification for interpreters in languages for which there is no Consortium oral examination. To become registered a candidate must meet the following requirements:

- Must Attend Orientation (same for all certification candidates)
- Must attend Skills-Building Workshop (at this time optional for others)
- Must pass written consortium exam at 80% (same for all certification candidates)
- Must pass both the Oral Proficiency Interview Computer-Adapted (OPIc) in English and the Oral Proficiency Interview telephonic (OPI) in language other than English for which the Consortium has no oral examination at the Superior Level
- Must complete all the remaining steps that are expected of a Certified Interpreter, i.e. application and background check, post-certification class on courtroom protocol and ethics, swearing in and oath, ID badge, continuing education requirements.

Related materials are attached. If you have any questions, please contact Pam Sánchez, [aocpjs@nmcourts.gov](mailto:aocpjs@nmcourts.gov).

## **Speaking Proficiency Assessments**

Language Testing International (LTI) offers a variety of speaking assessments - both direct and semi-direct tests of speaking proficiency. The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Advanced Level Check (AL Check-Speaking) are live, telephonic interviews with ACTFL Certified Oral Proficiency Testers. The new OPIC is a semi-direct speaking test taken by computer or telephone that simulates an ACTFL OPI. All oral proficiency assessments are conducted and/or rated by ACTFL Certified Oral Proficiency Testers and Raters according to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking (Revised 1999)*.

## The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview "OPI"

### General Description

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, or OPI, as it is often called, is a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability. The interview is interactive and continuously adapts to the experiences, interests and linguistic competence of the candidate. Through a series of personalized questions, a sample of speech is elicited and rated according to the proficiency levels described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Speaking (Revised 1999)*.

The OPI assesses language proficiency in terms of the speaker's ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations. It is not concerned with, nor does it address, when, where, why, or the way in which a speaker has acquired his/her language. The OPI is not an achievement test assessing a speaker's acquisition of specific aspects of a language and/or vocabulary. The OPI does not compare one individual's performance to others, but each individual's performance to the assessment criteria in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Speaking (Revised 1999)*.

**In contrast to many other language tests, the validity and rating reliability of ACTFL assessments are supported through in-house and independent, published research projects.**

**Test Length** 20-30 minutes.

**Test Format** A live telephonic interview between an ACTFL Certified Tester and a candidate, which is digitally recorded by the LTI IVR system. It resembles a conversation between two people but, in fact, follows a strict, standardized structure and elicitation protocol.

**Test Content** Content is adapted to the candidate's professional and academic experiences, as well as any special skills or interests (following guidelines set forth by the EEOC and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act). The OPI also includes a role-play. Content areas and/or role-play may be customized by the client.

**Rating** A criterion referenced assessment. The ACTFL Certified Tester compares the speech produced by the candidate in the interview to the rating criteria as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Speaking (Revised 1999)*; one of ten possible ratings is assigned.

**Languages** Proficiency assessments are offered in the following 50+ languages\* by telephone: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Cebuano, Chavacano, Croatian, Czech, Dari, Dutch, Egyptian, English, Filipino, French, German, Modern Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hmong, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Javanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Malay, Mandarin, Mong, Norwegian, Pashto, Persian Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tausug, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Visayan and Wu.

\* Testing in regional dialects of Arabic is also available.

## The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview – Computer Adapted ACTFL OPic®

### General Description

The ACTFL OPic® is an internationally used, semi-direct test of spoken proficiency designed to elicit a sample of speech via recorded, computer-adapted voice prompts. Corporations with a need for proficiency evaluations that can be delivered immediately, on-demand, will be able to administer an ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview-like test without the presence of a live tester to conduct the interview.

Completed tests are digitally saved and rated by ACTFL Certified OPic Raters. The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Speaking (Revised 1999)* are the basis for assigning a rating. Research conducted demonstrates that ratings assigned to OPic samples generally correlate to ratings assigned to direct assessments of speaking proficiency derived through ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI).

The OPic is intended for all adult audiences. This test is appropriate for a variety of purposes: employment selection, placement into training programs, demonstration of an individual's linguistic progress, and evidence of training effectiveness.

**Test Length** Approximately 30 minutes.

**Test Format** Digitally recorded prompts are delivered through computer via the internet, or telephonically using VOIP technology.

**By computer:** Test is delivered via the internet and taken on computer with a microphone headset. A test candidate moves through the test by “clicking” on navigation icons found on the computer screen. Spoken responses are digitally recorded. At the end of the test, the candidate's responses are uploaded to the internet for instantaneous delivery to LTI.

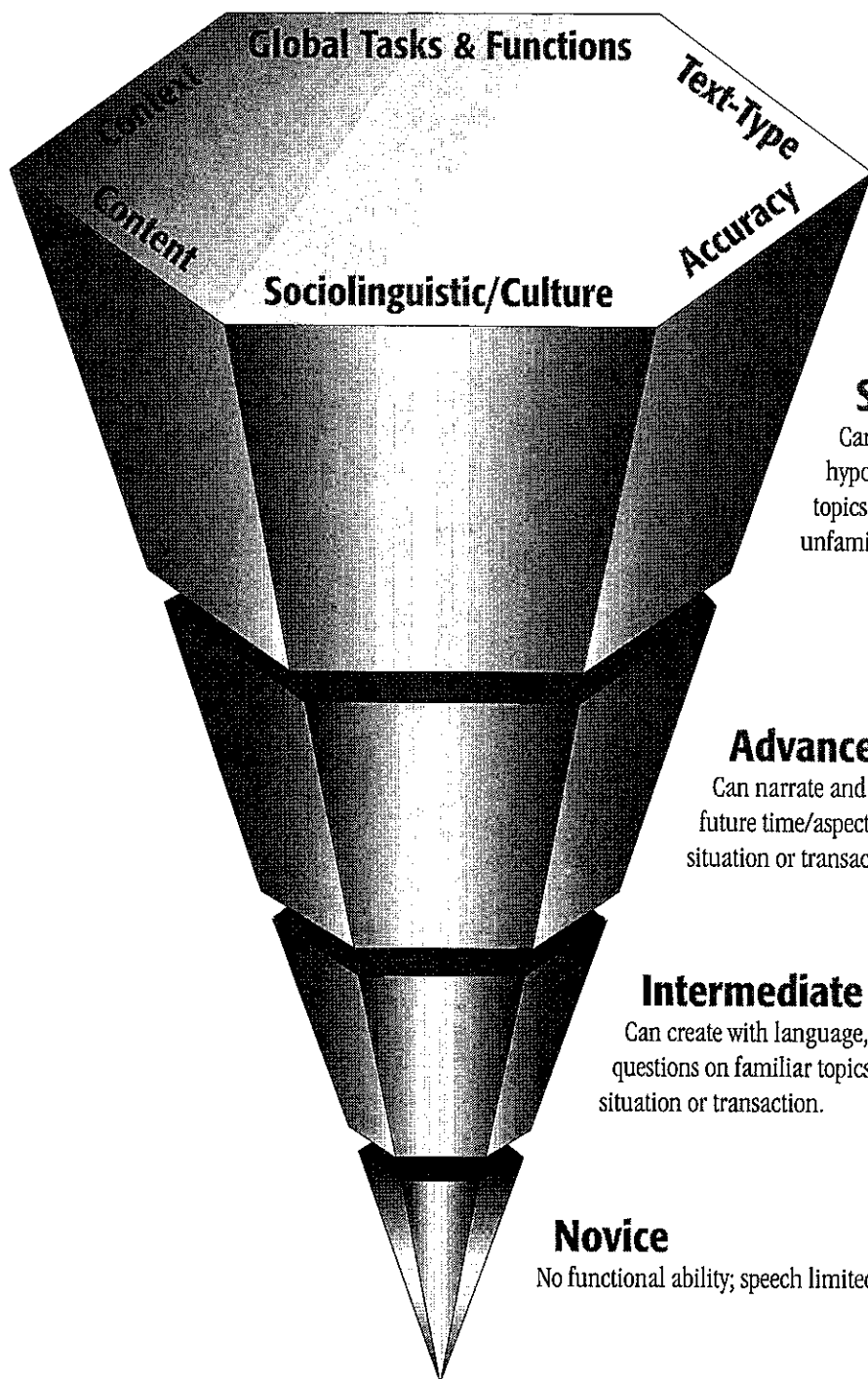
**By telephone:** Test is delivered by telephone. A test candidate navigates through the test with the aid of verbal instructions and the phone key pad. The candidate's spoken responses are digitally recorded by LTI.

**Test Content** Each test is individualized through the selection of tasks within topic areas tailored to the test taker's linguistic ability, work experiences, academic background and interests.

**Rating** The OPic is a criterion-referenced assessment. The ACTFL Certified Rater compares the candidate's digitally recorded responses to rating criteria as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Speaking (Revised 1999)*.

**Languages** Internet delivered versions of the OPic are available in English and Spanish. Telephone delivered versions in these languages will be introduced shortly. Other languages will be launched in the fourth quarter of 2007.

## ACTFL Proficiency Rating Scale & Guidelines



### **Superior**

Can support opinions, hypothesize, discuss abstract topics, and handle a linguistically unfamiliar situation.

### **Advanced**

Can narrate and describe in past, present, and future time/aspect, and handle a complicated situation or transaction.

### **Intermediate**

Can create with language, ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics, and handle a simple situation or transaction.

### **Novice**

No functional ability; speech limited to memorized material.